

Lovers Lake by Corny_Cornflakes

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Summary:

Jopper in season 3. History, memories and love. Just two lonely and hurt people on the search for someone who understands their feelings and flaws.

Lovers Lake

Author's Note:

This is a short one shot about a scene I really hope to see in Stranger Things season 3. I love Jopper with all of my heart and I can't stop thinking about their relationship. Also this is my first Jopper fanfic so please be nice I tried my best!

„Where are we going?“, she asked for the hundreath time. „It's a surprise, just trust me!“ , he mumbled under his breath.

All the way there Joyce was nervous and although she knew that nothing bad would happen, she couldn't stop thinking about the worst possible scenario. But why? The kids were at the Wheeler's 4th of July party and nothing bad has happened for the past couple of months. Well, at least nothing super natural. Losing her job is something different. Or the fact that Hopper almost got shot. Maybe for once in her life she should try to chill and forget about all the bad memories.

“I just want you to take some place nice, geez relax Joyce”

“I know, I'm just- I'm sorry, it's really difficult for me”, she sighed and looked at him with her brown eyes which slowly started to tear up.

“You're gonna like it”, with his response Hopper grabbed her hand and squeezed it tight. For once she felt a little bit safer next to him.

“Aaaand... we're here!“. They stepped out of the car into the dark, cold night. The trees were dancing to the wind, and so did her hair. Hopper noticed that Joyce was freezing and put his jacket on her shoulders. “This is too big for me!“, she laughed, and it was the most beautiful sound he has heard in a very long time. “I think it looks great on you!“, he responded and put his arm around Joyce. It was a small gesture, but it meant so much for both of them.

After Bob died, their relationship had a rough time. They never felt so close and distanced at the same time. Joyce tried to push him away as far as possible, until he noticed something was wrong. Then, one cold November night, her emotions exploded. She told him that it was his fault that Bob died. Obviously Joyce never meant to say that, but Hopper just pushed too hard on her. They didn't even talk to each other for weeks and the kids got worried, since El and Will loved spending time together. It wasn't until 3 days before the snowball when Hopper called her to ask for a "very important favor". El needed a dress and some make-up, something a grown man had no idea of. She was almost like a daughter Joyce never had and she didn't want to punish her just because of a fight between her and her adoptive father.

And it wasn't until the snowball that they forgave each other. There wasn't much talking, but the gestures said everything. Joyce needed a shoulder she could lean on in her difficult times and Hopper needed someone who could help him take care of a teenage girl. At that moment both realized how much they needed each other, no matter how screwed up the world may be.

The next months passed by quickly and they were spending almost every day together. Hopper would drop off El and the kids would listen to music or watch all the Star Wars movies for the thousandth time, while the adult sat on the porch just talking with a cigarette and bottle of beer in their hands. Even in their high school times they weren't so close.

And it wasn't until their lives began to crush down once again Joyce noticed she loves him. It wasn't just the fact that Melvald's closed down and she lost her job, it was the fact that Hopper spent the rest of the day driving around the city searching for a new job for her while she was at home taking care of the kids and trying to get her life together. They spent that evening looking through applications at the Starcourt Mall. After hours and a dozen cups of coffee Joyce fell asleep on Hoppers chest and he didn't wake her up. Instead he covered her with a cozy blanket and stayed in the same position until he fell asleep too.

The other time she noticed she loves him was the day Hopper almost got shot. Actually Joyce didn't even know he was deep into a

political conspiracy theory, surrounding the new mayor of Hawkins. Somehow he always managed to get into trouble because of his stubbornness.

But when she found him in his car, which was covered in bullets, her heart almost stopped. She couldn't lose the man she loved. Not again. Although he wasn't hurt, she couldn't stop thinking about what would have happened if he was. Joyce spent the rest of that day sitting next to him and not letting him out of sight. Even when Hopper had to go pick up El from the Wheeler's, she went with him. Who knows what he would do? Last year he went into these "vine tunnels" without saying anything and almost got killed.

And at that moment Hopper realized he started to fall in love with her too. But did he ever stop? Joyce was always on his mind. It started back on the first day of middle school when she sat next to him and wore these cute ponytails. After they got into high school it was more than just a small crush. Those cigarettes under the stairs quickly turned into make out sessions and gossips.

But then there came Vietnam. Hopper had to leave Hawkins and Joyce. She waited 2 years for him, until he stopped responding to her letters. She met Lonnie, got pregnant and began a completely new life. He was heartbroken. Even the idea of Joyce being happy with another man drove him crazy. The same evening he went to New York and wanted to leave this hell of a town forever. Shortly after he met Diane, married her and had a daughter. Sara was perfect. But even then he couldn't stop thinking: "what if?".

In 1979 Hopper's life fell apart once again. He lost his family and left his job at the NYPD. After finding out his mother in Hawkins got sick, he immediately moved back to take care of her. He found a job at the local police station and tried to act like nothing happened. But the people knew everything. The whole town gossiped about his tragedy and no matter where he went, someone always gave him a pity look.

Joyce was the only one who didn't treat him differently. After his comeback her marriage started to fall apart too. Although she loved her boys, Lonnie was drunk and violent all the time. She tried to ignore it as long as he didn't hurt any of their sons, until it happened. Joyce didn't even hesitate to call the police. Hopper came very

quickly and took care of the situation. After Joyce was alone and Lonnie was at the police station, he came back. He couldn't just leave her alone since he knew in how much pain she was. Although it was awkward for both of them to be together in a room after so many years without any contact, they needed it. They really needed it. Even if it wasn't talking, just sitting next to each other on an old, dirty sofa.

Afterwards they almost never talked to each other until Will went missing. Their lives suddenly changed forever with that event and they couldn't talk to anyone about it except for the kids at each other. And well, it seemed like they finally had a topic to talk about which didn't include their past and their marriages, no matter how crazy it was. It was almost like they met for the first time again.

And then there came Bob. He was a nice guy they knew for high school who always read his comic-books between the lessons and was passionate about technology. Now he worked at the Radio Shack and seemed to have a good life. Hopper didn't even notice when Joyce started seeing him more often, until Bob finally invited her on a first date. He tried to hide his jealousy as much as possible. But why was he even jealous? They weren't together and considering their rocky past Joyce deserved a guy with a "normal" life. Someone who didn't carry around a baggage of problems and sorrow. But even then he wished that there would be a little bit more between them so they could share their baggage with someone who would actually understand them. But besides that he had to take care of a child. After El, or actually Jane, came into his life everything turned around. Hopper didn't have time to think about women and relationships. He had a completely new responsibility.

But now he had the chance to work it out. Bob was gone and Joyce really needed someone who understands her imperfections. So Hopper decided to ask her out on a "nice night out" to a surprise place without telling her much and she said yes. They actually planned to go to the Wheeler's 4th of July party, but both knew that the kids would be screaming around all the time and Karen would only complain about Ted while flushing down a whole bottle of red wine. So anything would be better than that.

He planned the evening for weeks for it to be perfect. Maybe it was

his last chance to impress the one and only Joyce Byers. But no matter how much time he spent on preparing he couldn't stop to think about the worst scenario. What if she doesn't feel the way he does? What if she's still not over Bob or just doesn't search for a relationship? What if he messes up again? God, these thoughts couldn't leave his head and with every single moment he got more nervous. But once he put his arm around Joyce and she came closer to him, it felt perfect. The smell of her coconut shampoo made him smile and he felt like the luckiest man alive.

Still having no idea where they were, Joyce grew more and more excited for Hopper's surprise. She trusted him, so there was no need to feel scared. As they walked through the dark woods, a small meadow appeared in front of them. That was when Joyce finally found out where they were going.

"Hop, I- I don't know what to say."

"You don't have to."

The Lovers Lake. The one place which meant the most for both of them. It was the place where they shared their first kiss, the place where he told her he was leaving for Vietnam and the place she kept on coming back to when she missed him. So much history and memories just at one location. And the best part about this surprise was that he remembered all of that. Joyce thought that only she associated Lovers Lake with their complicated, but amazing relationship. She was so, so wrong about that. After Hopper came back from New York he spent most of his weekends at the lake, just to reminisce about his first love. He wished so many times that Joyce would sit there next to him, holding his hand.

His wishes finally came true. As they watched the sun go down on the horizon of Lovers Lake, Joyce laid her head on his shoulder and grabbed him by the hand. Nothing could make this moment even better. Or could it?

"I love you", Joyce whispered under her breath. Shit, was I too early considering it was their first date after years of nothing? Wait, was it even a date? She began panicking and she felt that he was nervous too. She didn't plan on saying it, not yet, these words just rolled out of her mouth.

“I love you too”, he responded after a while. And he meant it. He wouldn’t just bring anyone to such a special place. Hopper waited so long for this day to come. Joyce, obviously astonished by his response, turned to him and looked deep into his blue eyes. She couldn’t believe it was happening. She stood up on her tip toes and kissed him like back in their teenage days. He immediately kissed her back and put his arms around her waist. Now for sure nothing else could make this evening for both of them more perfect than the fact that they were in each other’s hands, finally reuniting after so many years of pain and loneliness.

It’s called Lovers Lake for some reason after all.